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2 **CLAIMS:**

3 What is claimed is:

1 1. A method in a requesting local knowledge management
2 server for retrieving digital assets in a distributed
3 data processing system wherein the digital assets are
4 stored in a distributed fashion on local storage devices,
5 the method comprising:

6 querying a central registry of digital assets for
7 the location of a requested digital asset, wherein the
8 central registry stores identity and storage location
9 information for digital assets within the distributed
10 data processing system;

11 receiving the storage location of the requested
12 digital asset;

13 sending a request for the requested digital asset to
14 an identified local knowledge management server having
15 access to the storage location of the requested digital
16 asset;

17 receiving the digital asset from the local knowledge
18 management server.

1 2. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein access to
2 the central registry of digital assets is controlled by a
3 central knowledge management server.

1 3. The method as recited in claim 2, wherein the
2 central knowledge management server, prior to allowing
3 the requesting local knowledge management server to
4 receive the storage location information, authenticating
5 that the requesting local knowledge management server is
6 authorized to access the central registry of digital
7 assets.

1 4. The method as recited in claim 3, wherein the
2 central knowledge management server prohibits access to
3 the central registry of digital assets if the requesting
4 local knowledge management server is not authenticated.

1 5. The method as recited in claim 1, further
2 comprising:
3 receiving a reply from the identified local
4 knowledge management server requesting that the
5 requesting local knowledge management server provide
6 authenticating information to the identified local
7 knowledge management server indicating that the
8 requesting local knowledge management server is
9 authorized to access the requested digital asset.

1 6. The method as recited in claim 5, further
2 comprising:
3 sending authenticating information with the request
4 for the digital asset indicating authority to access the
5 requested digital asset.

1 7. The method as recited in claim 1, further
2 comprising:

3 sending authenticating information with the request
4 for the digital asset indicating authority to access the
5 requested digital asset.

1 8. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein at least
2 some transmissions between the requesting digital asset
3 management system and the identified digital asset
4 management system are encrypted.

1 9. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the
2 digital asset comprises one of audio clips, phone
3 messages, electronically delivered facsimiles, videos,
4 still photographs, text, and graphics.

1 10. A computer program product in a computer readable
2 media for use in a requesting local knowledge management
3 data processing system for retrieving digital assets in a
4 distributed data processing system wherein the digital
5 assets are stored in a distributed fashion on local
6 storage devices, the computer program product comprising:
7 first instructions for querying a central registry
8 of digital assets for the location of a requested digital
9 asset, wherein the central registry stores identity and
10 storage location information for digital assets within
11 the distributed data processing system;
12 second instructions for receiving the storage
13 location of the requested digital asset;

14 third instructions for sending a request for the
15 requested digital asset to an identified local knowledge
16 management server having access to the storage location
17 of the requested digital asset;
18 fourth instructions for receiving the digital asset
19 from the local knowledge management server.

1 11. The computer program product as recited in claim 10,
2 wherein access to the central registry of digital assets
3 is controlled by a central knowledge management server.

1 12. The computer program product as recited in claim 11,
2 wherein the central knowledge management server, prior to
3 allowing the requesting local knowledge management server
4 to receive the storage location information,
5 authenticating that the requesting local knowledge
6 management server is authorized to access the central
7 registry of digital assets.

1 13. The computer program product as recited in claim 12,
2 wherein the central knowledge management server prohibits
3 access to the central registry of digital assets if the
4 requesting local knowledge management server is not
5 authenticated.

1 14. The computer program product as recited in claim 10,
2 further comprising:
3 fifth instructions for receiving a reply from the
4 identified local knowledge management server requesting

5 that the requesting local knowledge management server
6 provide authenticating information to the identified
7 local knowledge management server indicating that the
8 requesting local knowledge management server is
9 authorized to access the requested digital asset.

1 15. The computer program product as recited in claim 14,
2 further comprising:

3 sixth instructions for sending authenticating
4 information with the request for the digital asset
5 indicating authority to access the requested digital
6 asset.

1 16. The computer program product as recited in claim 10,
2 further comprising:

3 fifth instructions for sending authenticating
4 information with the request for the digital asset
5 indicating authority to access the requested digital
6 asset.

1 17. The computer program product as recited in claim 10,
2 wherein at least some transmissions between the
3 requesting knowledge management system and the identified .
4 knowledge management system are encrypted.

1 18. The computer program product as recited in claim 10,
2 wherein the digital asset comprises one of audio clips,
3 phone messages, electronically delivered facsimiles,
4 videos, still photographs, text, and graphics.

1 19. A system in a requesting local knowledge management
2 data processing system for retrieving digital assets in a
3 distributed data processing system wherein the digital
4 assets are stored in a distributed fashion on local
5 storage devices, the system comprising:

6 first means for querying a central registry of
7 digital assets for the location of a requested digital
8 asset, wherein the central registry stores identity and
9 storage location information for digital assets within
10 the distributed data processing system;

11 second means for receiving the storage location of
12 the requested digital asset;

13 third means for sending a request for the requested
14 digital asset to an identified local knowledge management
15 server having access to the storage location of the
16 requested digital asset;

17 fourth means for receiving the digital asset from
18 the local knowledge management server.

1 20. The system as recited in claim 19, wherein access to
2 the central registry of digital assets is controlled by a
3 central knowledge management server.

1 21. The system as recited in claim 20, wherein the
2 central knowledge management server, prior to allowing
3 the requesting local knowledge management server to
4 receive the storage location information, authenticating
5 that the requesting local knowledge management server is

6 authorized to access the central registry of digital
7 assets.

1 22. The system as recited in claim 21, wherein the
2 central knowledge management server prohibits access to
3 the central registry of digital assets if the requesting
4 local knowledge management server is not authenticated.

1 23. The system as recited in claim 19, further
2 comprising:
3 fifth means for receiving a reply from the
4 identified local knowledge management server requesting
5 that the requesting local knowledge management server
6 provide authenticating information to the identified
7 local knowledge management server indicating that the
8 requesting local knowledge management server is
9 authorized to access the requested digital asset.

1 24. The system as recited in claim 23, further
2 comprising:
3 sixth means for sending authenticating information
4 with the request for the digital asset indicating
5 authority to access the requested digital asset.

1 25. The system as recited in claim 19, further
2 comprising:
3 fifth means for sending authenticating information
4 with the request for the digital asset indicating
5 authority to access the requested digital asset.

1 26. The system as recited in claim 19, wherein at least
2 some transmissions between the requesting knowledge
3 management system and the identified knowledge management
4 system are encrypted.

1 27. The system as recited in claim 19, wherein the
2 digital asset comprises one of audio clips, phone
3 messages, electronically delivered facsimiles, videos,
4 still photographs, text, and graphics.